hold the pen in such a way that one word is written differently from another. I shall go to Jet Leonard — no, he is planting hollyhocks: I shall get my dog then & go for a brisk walk on the NYPL marshes, returning at 7-30 sharp when my enchanting widow will dish up two grilled herrings. Our dinner will cost us 7d.

Yes you ought to be here now & see the bust of Venus against the ~~apple tree~~. pear tree (I have perched the tree by looking out of the window)

I dont want to come back to London in the least. Oh & I have 15 letters to write, & at least 3 feet of MS. to read & two or worrying tragedians, authors, whose fate depends on me, to knock on the head.

Naturally therefore I warble on, unnecessarily to Dame Ethel Smyth; who wont read all this, being in a hurricane today, putting in trumpets, cello; & a trombone or two in the bass. She thumps it out on her piano; & early roused to life by her dog; does she ever eat her dinner, or is it always cold? VW.

Rec'd 2.4.19

52 Tavistock Sqe Monday Sep 28th 1920

I have just got back & found your letter. I am sure you are perfectly right to be angry with what I said in my letter. I don't remember exactly what it was, but I expect it was the sort of banter which (as Vita or any of my friends would tell you) I always scribble in letters. (I wasn't thinking of Dodo, — it was something you said on the telephone to your maid; & I don't understand why my wishing you to be my heart free annoys you — you wish me to be your Dalilah.)
But I don't blame myself.

I am oddly (since I am the victim) glad that you should be dismissed. I hate illusions. Do no more.

Truro. Tuesday, perhaps
6th May 1930

Well we have reached here safely, & found your letter, but we did not bring the dog, from Cawsand. Excuse irrelevance & spelling, psychological fears. I'm so sleepy. We have been driving all day from Tavistock over Dartmoor in a storm, & calling back where we saw a shop, but it's Decidedly Early Closing. No one read no one want books the bookseller says, & they keep on hanging about. But Lord what a lovely country this is — England, I mean; & Even so much older than I thought. I want to live on Shaftesbury Down, most. Here we are under your Benson Cathedral, & my Hugh Walpoles. But how I yawn! The Evening
Cathedral

are the work-newhere to sit; or a room full of old, respectable
window ladies, - whispering to each other. Not an inn from London
here is without its Jezebel or Eleven. And once they were married, -
once they had children. And my head thinks wickedness what they'll
doing in Truro tonight: but then they stop & go. NYPL Yes, I'm
too sleepy to go into psychology. But you see, I make up stories;
that's my downfall; imagine situations, & forget that the
person concerned is flesh & blood, like myself, with feelings. I am
therefore very treacherous. But enough of myself. By the way,
I heard the Wrekin play Eso, from the hut, a home theake.
Tomorrow we go to Penzance; visit my old home, St Ives; &
then back, by way of Salisbury & Rodmell. What a
life! It's a kind of dream - one slides from town to
town, inn hells, by rivers; always the same old ladies at
night - Kipling

Rote 2.4.43

Wednesday May 13th

I ask how difficult it is to write a letter! You painters & musicians dont know the horror of pens that dry up & no blotting paper.

Also, what work you (Vanessa. Shd rather like a mouse pinned out on a board for dissection. I'm so odd, & I'm so limited. I'm so different from the ordinary human being — so you say. Have a strong suspicion that I'm the simplest of us all, & that its my extreme transparency that baffles you too otherwise gifted women. I dont think I give feel anything but the most ordinary emotions; but there —

I want begin chitting about the poor mouse, who is distracted enough without that. Shall I or Shall I not go to the Opera NYPL — Parsifal — with Hugh Walpole ? Shall I or Shall I not go to a cocktail party at Raymond Mortimers ? Shall I or Shall I not read the three long MSS. on my table — or go on reading Hazlitt for an article that has to be begun tomorrow, or take Punka for a walk — but then she will have hiccups on the pavement — or do nothing — nothing at all ? How are my medicaments. Gertrude only came back on Sunday; & Stein only Wednesday; & already I am given over with doubts & enthalled with thorns. Would ye & Vanessa know how to burst through, free & unscathed ? I suppose so. Well, I

Rota 2-4-63

want begin a yon (Vanena, a I should draw some of those fancy pictures for which I am so famous – (a joke – if I had any red ink, I would write my jokes in it, so that even certain musicians – ahem!)

I don't see why Miss E. Williamson shouldn't come & dine with us. Why not? I don't see why she should be shy. I don't see how you can play your music because I haven't got a piano. I feel at the moment a helpless babe on the shore of life, turning over pebbles. Yes (Vanena must really see to the whole affair. I forgot to say – there is no sequence in these remarks – that my life is further complicated by six letters

daily from people telling me that which is my best book; & it is always
different. Then I puzzle over that. And you, L. S. NYPL Say the
opposite. And I have to write so many very polite lies — being
merely I think the truthfullest of people. Did I once say I
lied? well, that was a joke. I cant pass a lie, no more than —
Cannot a needle. Leonard is printing. Pinka's snoring. Shall
I go to the opera; shall I go to the cock tail party? So.
The clean tones its pebbles, & I turn them over, naked, a
child, & no one helps me. Thurs Ethel at Wkng away
her year — no daffodil tree; with her balcon mouldering
on the piano. Dear me! I've just & done it again! By
the way, why do you take so much interest in your
own character? Or dont you? Why are you so fiercely
& savagely aware of what is to me a transient & fitful
flame? V.

Rote 2.4.69

52 Tavistock Sqr.

Monday (26.5.30)

Wed-

Look – I have taken a new nib.

Truly I weren't a writer, perhaps I could thank you & praise you & admire you perfectly simply & expressively & say in one word what I felt about the Concert Saturday. As it is, an image forms in my mind; a quickset briar hedge, immensely intricate & spiky & thorned; in the centre burns a rose. Miraculously, the rose is you; flushed pink, wearing pearls. The thorn hedge is the music; & I have to break my way through to you. Flute, Cymbals, voice to the red burning centre. Then I admit that this has nothing to do with musical criticism. It is only what I felt as I sat in my silver winged (was it winged?) chair in the stalls Saturday. I am enthralled that you, the dominant – turbulent, should ever have this tremor – this vibration of fire round you – violins thickening, flute barring: (the image is yr

winter hedge) – that you should be able to create this world from your centre. Perhaps I was not thinking of the magic but of all the loves & ages you have been through. Lord – what a complexity the soul is! NYPL But I must scratch all the skin off my fingers trying to get round. But my dear Ethel & it was frightfully good of you to let me come – dear me yes – what a generous woman you are – & how I adore your generosity & the phenomena with which you scatter the floor with hair-pins & jumble on your blanket for a spectacle Come & embrace the governor of Cyprus & enfold in all in- the spontaneity & ruthlessness of your career. That- what I call living; that's the quality I wanted Give my eyes to posterity. Observe, in my fruitless & sidelong ways (living like a flat fish with eyes not in the usual place) I had had a good deal of this years ago in your books, & now I begin to read it & other additions & elevations too in your music. It will take a long time not merely because I am musically so feeble, but because all my faculties are so industriously bringing in news of so many Ethels at the same moment. Now I set a new target for impressions & try to catch each one as it flies & find its speed & its whole & its blue ring for it

Rota 2.4.63

I only offer this explanation as my dumbness & fatuity yesterday. I couldn't say 'I like that but' or 'that' because I was looking out, in a rabid elementary way, a mystical answer: But perhaps you saw, with your hawk's glance, to the bottom of my silence.

Dear Ethel, please do something for me really generous; & let me contribute £ my share to the entertainment: Please do. I had a ticket (which I lost) & tea, a very good tea; & I want to write a cheque to give to the Gentleman like an enraged frog playing Cymbals in the background. He wants a new tie — this all & some thing on the left hand side. Please convey this to him with my blessing.

Well: My Cook has been stricken in the Kidneys: I'm waiting for the Doctor; I may have to take her to the hospital - A Dismal Rout of morning. But I recur to the rose among the briars, like an old fishy woman, in a damp ditch warming her hands at the

fire. And then we have to give 3 Scandinavians lunch at a restaurant

Then the doctor. No: a

false alarm.

NYPL

Nevertheless, I must bring this to an end & grapple with the problems of normal & natural human life.

By the way, Puck a has had 6 puppies, all black, in my arm chair at Rodmell.

I wrote to ask M. Baring to dine, with Eliz: no answer: I sent it to the Chelsea addres. What am I to do? O Ethel please tell me; what am I to do?

Virginia

Rec'd 2.V.13